

COWWARR CHRONICLE

Vol 1/09

January 2009.

Happy new year to everyone

Dates for the Diary

Wednesday 7th. January Deconsecration Service Christ Church

Where: Christ Church

From: 6:30pm

See more information on page 3.

Monday 26th. January Australia Day Breakfast.

Where: Cowwarr Public Hall

From: 8am

Cowwarr – Toongabbie Lions Club is happy to announce that our traditional OZ Day Breakfast AND Lolly Scramble will be on again. This event is FREE so come along and join in the fun or just catch up on the goss.

Other Important Stuff

Gippsland Plains Rail Trail Calendars

There are still a few left and can be purchased from the Shop or Pub for \$20.

The calendar features all the stations along the old railway line from Traralgon to Stratford, which of course included Cowwarr.

Cowwarr Cutters Cup Wash-up.

Despite less people through the gate the Committee was able to hand over \$2,500 to the Cowwarr Rural Fire Brigade to assist in fitting out the extension to the shed – when it gets built!

A **BIG BIG BIG** thank-you to all the hardworking volunteers without whom this event would not be able to be staged.

from the Shed – January 2009.

ment on pre-season briefing.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCES

By FIREMAN SAM

pre summer briefings going on around the state for this year it is pleasing to see that some of the things that have led me about the use (and abuse) of ICS are being addressed. It will be interesting to see just how well we reactively accept and adjust to the messages we are being given. I am inclined to think that there will be a general acceptance of the messages because they address issues and shortcomings that I have heard many talk about. That is, I hope, that people will be happy to dispose of the old and accept the new - or is it more a swing of the pendulum back to what we used to do?

Do not miss the great wads of paper and the 1/2 hour briefings about Incident Action Plans that have been given to teams and crews at some fires. It has always seemed to me that the size of the IAP bore a direct relationship to the level of concern of the IMT about legal liabilities and the related CYA principle than the primary objective of getting the fire under control.

For those members who are dispatched as crews on Strike Teams have been deemed competent as wild-fire fighters there should be no need to be told how to suck eggs!

Forward to receiving a quick verbal briefing and then getting on with the job I was sent to do the next time I attend one of those 'fires'. No more 'No Go Zones', wherever they came from. The principle was probably sound but the implementation created a lot of headaches for fire crews and for members of the community. It seems like the new approach actually recognizes that those on the ground are, maybe, in a better position to assess the conditions and circumstances and decide for themselves whether it is safe to enter an area. The IMT maintain the responsibility to keep those on the ground informed about approaching conditions and fire behaviour predictions. The people on the ground - who are probably more concerned about their own safety than are those at the ICC - can then make an informed decision on their actions. Another little step back towards practicality that should lead to improved outcomes and reduced levels of frustration.

Let us say that I am not sure where the efforts to deal with fatigue will take us. I recognize that it is an aspect of emergency service work that we need to be conscious of but is it really feasible to try to create rules for firefighting that would apply in a typical or conventionally organized workplace? Surely the nature of an emergency requires a conventional response. In our workplace things are out of control and we are dealing with a crisis situation that requires urgent and constant efforts to regain control. Sometimes we just have to endure long and intense periods of effort.

When our communities are under threat we must continue to make an effort to achieve control over the situation. Once control is achieved or when we are off line for a rest, there may well be things that can be done to help address some of the issues. In recent years we have seen the use of coaches for transport of crews become more formalized and pre-departure briefings adds extra emphasis to this practice. Retrieval of trucks by relief drivers rather than by the tired drivers who have just come off line is also being done more often, particularly for longer duration large fires. Similarly, the length of duty cycles for crews seems to have been determined by a focus on making the trip worth the investment in terms of time on the job considering the distance and cost of transport, rather than the impact on the well-being of the crew members themselves. Three, four or five days of intensive physical effort and travel with patchy sleep that results from short rest periods in beds we are not used to is enough to make anyone tired. For those who we should be resting. Those of us from farms or who conduct a small business cannot just put them on hold for the duration of a fire, particularly fires that go for days or weeks at a time.

When we do return home from a tour of duty it is unreasonable to expect that we will take another couple of days off to recover and yet this is the situation with paid staff of both organizations. In a perfect world we would either have those willing (and competent) people to enjoy reasonable length shifts and adequate rest. The reality is that we are not in a perfect world, nor are we likely to be, so we will need to continue to permit ordinary life to continue within travel time of the fire there is the added problem caused from undertaking work tasks at home when people to do ordinary things whenever there is an emergency to combat.

Our community expect it of us and they respect us for making the effort. They also have enough sense to recognize that we are not superhuman and that tiredness is a well known causal factor in accidents. Nobody wants us to work to the point where we become a hazard to ourselves or our colleagues. So, our challenge is to recognize when we are pushing the limits and beginning to develop into a liability rather than an asset to our fellow crew members.

It is good that those managing emergencies will be expected to develop action plans that recognize the need to manage the development of fatigue but let's hope they are not hamstrung by inflexible rules or guidelines that would interfere with or hamper the achievement of the overall objective. It is a fact that the need for change to our procedures and practices is often slow to be recognized and acted on. However the content of this year's briefings provide evidence that some of our feedback does make it through the analytical filtering and long winded consultation processes of the organization.

Extracted from "The Fireman" December 2008

Bushfire Information Line 1800 240 667

Contacts:	Captain Andrew Iseppi	5148 9339
Co-ordinators:	Anton Vardy	(0417) 380 329
	Burleigh	5148 9364
Treasurer:	Stacey Shepley	(0417) 595 905

Information to the Cowwarr Community re Christ Church Cowwarr.

Please find attached to the Chronicle, a letter from the Anglican Bishop of Gippsland, Bishop John McIntyre 23/12/2008 to the Cowwarr community. While the letter is not on the Bishops letterhead we can assure you it is genuine and delivered to us by Reverend Keith South,, Parish of Heyfield.

There are some important events about to happen in relation to the church which we all need to be aware of. Early this year, a meeting was held after a church service in Cowwarr to determine the future of the church and the small congregation here in Cowwarr. At that meeting the only offer on the table was by Helen Hoppner to purchase the church so it could be kept in this community. After a lot of discussion, appropriate valuations and agreements, the Anglican Trust finally offered the church and contents except for the font and altar.

As you will see in the letter from the Bishop, this does not include the Font which is the oldest piece of church furniture, nor the altar which was dedicated to the local men who lost their lives in the 14/18 war.

Unfortunately the trust would not make any concessions on these two pieces of Cowwarr's history much in all as Helen tried to convince them they should stay with the building and this community. We understand that the altar will be taken to the Anglican Church at Toongabbie and the font will go to the Anglican church at Glengarry after deconsecration of the church on Wednesday 7th January.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING DATE FOR THE FINAL DECONSECRATION SERVICE OF CHRIST CHURCH COWWARR.

On Wednesday 7th January, Bishop John McIntyre will officiate in the final church deconsecration service at Christ Church Cowwarr, ..6.30pm. This is an open invitation for those who want to attend for the final Anglican service.

This is also a chance to speak to the Bishop in person regarding any church matters.

Helen would like the community to know that the church building and furniture that is left will be used in the future for the intended use as a non denominational church provided that the change of ownership meets any Council permit requirements . Please ring Helen if you need any information regarding church matters.

Letter from Bishop McIntyre

“With the deconsecration of the church building of Christ Church Cowwarr on January 7, 2009 comes the need for the people of Cowwarr, as part of the Parish of Heyfield, to determine how mission, ministry and worship in Cowwarr will continue into the future.

The deconsecration of the church building is itself an act of worship that returns the building to secular use. This is necessary in order to sell the building. As part of that service, the altar and font will be removed from the church, as these furnishings are the distinctive items in the building that signify its use for religious purposes.

The church historically has not depended on buildings in order to carry out its responsibilities in ministry and mission in the life of any given community. In fact, across Gippsland there were many ministries initiated in a range of communities long before church buildings were erected in those towns. Not having a particular building set apart solely for the use of the church can also be a healthy reminder to us that the church is primarily a group of people committed to Jesus Christ and to mission and ministry in his name in the wider community.

Soon it will be important for the Christian community of Cowwarr to be called together to see how the Anglican Church can continue best to serve the spiritual needs of their community alongside Christians of other denominations still living and active in the town. I will work with the Reverend Keith South to organise a meeting early in the new year for us to discuss with the people of Cowwarr and other representatives of the Parish of Heyfield how best to continue this ministry in Cowwarr, which continues to be our responsibility.

Bishop John McIntyre 23.12.2008”

GOOD NEWS

The Gippsland Plains Rail Trail Committee has received another \$70,000 to extend the works from Rainbow Creek to the Thompson River.

The money will be spent putting in culverts and generally upgrading the trail through to the Thompson. The Committee is currently looking at proposals to ford the Thompson but funding is scarce at the moment – will keep you updated with any progress.

The rendering of the Reading Room at the Hall has been finished and looks very swish. The Hall Committee now have to fix up the ceiling and floor and put everything back in place so the room can be used. The chimney has been swept – no hidden treasure unfortunately. The fireplace has been fixed and the fireplace surround is being restored which will mean come winter we can again light the fire and have a warm room.

Meals at the Pub are back to normal on Friday night – don't forget to book on 5148 9233.

See you all at the
OZ DAY BREAKFAST
ON
26th. JANUARY